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# **The Norway Airlanded MEB's Role In Crisis Response for The 1990's**

**A Monograph  
by**

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United States Marine Corps**

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## ABSTRACT

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This monograph examines whether the Norway Airlanded Marine Expeditionary Brigade (NALM), a unique MAGTF, will be a viable concept for crisis response as part of America's defense strategy for the 1990's. The NALM concept was designed to provide the Supreme Allied Commander Europe and the theater level planners with a viable instrument of war with which to execute their campaign plan on the northern flank of Europe. A strategic deployment option, the NALM concept consists of the use of selected equipment and supplies prepositioned in facilities in Central Norway. A Marine Expeditionary Brigade will be airlifted to link up with prepositioned equipment for further movement to an employment area within Norway.

The methodology of this monograph is to examine why amphibious warfare represents the essence of the operational level of war. Second, this paper reviews the anticipated security environment facing the nation based upon selected historical examples of the use of amphibious forces during the last decade. Third, it provides an analysis of a unique Marine Air-Ground Task Force, the NALM, utilizing the functions and capabilities that generate combat power at the operational level of war as delineated in Fleet Marine Force Manual 1-1, Campaigning. These seven functions and capabilities are the criteria by which the NALM is evaluated.

This monograph concludes that in the commitment of Marines to answer global crises during the last decade and in looking at the "threat" environment into the 1990's, the NALM is not relevant to the Marine Corps' mandated roles and missions. The NALM should be done away with but political realities in Europe will pressure the United States to maintain the prepositioning stocks in Norway.

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## I. Introduction

It is a crime to have amphibious power and leave it unused.

Winston Churchill<sup>1</sup>

The strategic aims of several great nations have been secured during the last 2,000 years through the projection of power by amphibious forces. During the Second Punic War, the Roman General Scipio landed on the Iberian Peninsula, severing the Carthaginian lines of supply in an attempt to defeat Hannibal.<sup>2</sup>

Wellington, during the Peninsula Campaign of the Napoleonic Wars, used sea-based expeditionary forces to gain a lodgement on the Continent forcing France to commit forces on two fronts.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the Pacific campaigns of World War II, amphibious forces were used to seize advanced naval and air bases thus providing the intermediate objectives that ultimately led to the defeat of Japan.<sup>4</sup> General MacArthur's landing of forces at Inchon during the Korean War is a prime example of attaining operational objectives through the use of amphibious forces.<sup>5</sup>

These historical examples illustrate elements of what is referred to as operational art. A review of current literature dealing with the operational level of war, campaign planning, and maneuver warfare will reveal that the majority of writing deals with land

warfare or continental warfare. There is an absence of writing that links naval and amphibious forces to operational and strategic objectives.

This paper will examine how the Marine Corps' amphibious forces with their sea and air mobility, organic sea-based logistics, and tailored combined arms organization can bring to the theater of war inherent strength that will greatly enhance the operational level of war for the combatant commander. The Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) is the tailored combined arms organization employed by the Marine Corps. The MAGTF has been and will continue to be the centerpiece of the Marine Corps' warfighting capability. Specifically this paper will examine whether the Norway Airlanded Marine Expeditionary Brigade (NALM), a unique MAGTF, will be a viable concept for crisis response as part of America's defense strategy for the 1990's. The thesis of this paper is that the NALM is not relevant to the Marine Corps' mandated roles and missions. The methodology of this paper will be to examine why amphibious warfare represents the essence of the operational level of war. Second, this paper reviews the anticipated security environment facing the nation based upon selected historical examples of the use of amphibious forces during the last decade. Third, it provides an analysis of a unique Marine Air-Ground Task



Force, the NALM, utilizing the functions and capabilities that generate combat power at the operational level of war as delineated in Fleet Marine Force Manual 1-1 (FMFM 1-1), Campaigning.

### The Threat

With the collapse of Soviet domination in Eastern Europe the Cold War has been declared resolved. In spite of this progress the world is not a peaceful place. Unstable governments and crises are a daily reminder that the United States is far from being safe from violence and turmoil.<sup>6</sup>

The National Security Strategy of the United States, signed by President Bush in August 1991, outlines the defense agenda for the 1990's. In consonance with the President's national security strategy, the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, signed the National Military Strategy for the 1990's in January 1992. The documents are "built upon the four key foundations of the National Defense Strategy; Strategic deterrence and defense, forward presence, crisis response, and reconstitution."<sup>7</sup> The Presidents' strategy captures both the uncertainty and danger inherent in instability:

In the emerging post-Cold War world, international relations promise to be more complicated, more volatile and less predictable.

Indeed, of all the mistakes that could be made about the security challenges of a new era, the most dangerous would be to believe that suddenly the future can be predicted with certainty. The history of the 20th century has been replete with surprises, many unwelcome.<sup>8</sup>

The bipolar, Cold War world of yesterday has been replaced with the multipolar world of today.

Independent regional power bases are starting to take shape throughout the world and not all are aligned with the United States or one of our allies. Some of these regional power bases do have or are building impressive military arsenals. Cuba, the Democratic Republic of Yemen, and Iran are but a few examples of regional power bases that may pose problems for regional stability and that lie astride geostrategic sea lanes or near maritime chokepoints.

The geographic position is important but the demographic implications of these regional power bases is equally important. Of the 113 cities in the world considered to be significant to U.S. interests, 80 are within 75 miles of the sea. Their capitals and major population centers are near the sea.<sup>9</sup> The State Department's Global 2000 Report to the President states:

...Four-fifths of the world's population will live in underdeveloped countries and three-quarters of the population will live within 500 kilometers of the sea.... Many of these

distant Third World regions will become maritime theaters, and amphibious forces...will serve as the instrument of choice.<sup>10</sup>

The new National Military Strategy has a regional focus due to the multipolar nature of today's world.

"Plans and resources will be focused on deterring and fighting regional rather than global wars.... Hence, forward presence and crisis response are fundamental to our regionally oriented strategy."<sup>11</sup> Future conflicts that the United States is likely to be involved in will be short, politically constrained, have limited objectives and a limited application of forces.

The Navy and Marine Corps have been providing the United States with forward presence and a means for crisis response since their inception. The future contains many threats to world peace and stability and amphibious forces can provide the combatant commander with the essential tools to defeat these threats.

## II. Amphibious Warfare - Operational Art

The Marine Corps...shall be so organized as to include not less than three combat divisions and three air wings, and such other land combat, aviation and other services as may be organic therein. The Marine Corps shall be organized, trained, and equipped to provide fleet marine forces of combined arms, together with supporting air components, for service with the fleet in the seizure or defense of advanced naval bases and for the conduct of such land operations as may be essential to the prosecution of a naval campaign.

United States Code, Title 10<sup>1</sup>

The prosecution of amphibious warfare requires the use of sea, air, and land forces. Amphibious forces are unique in that these functionally separate elements can be organized into a single entity and called an amphibious task force (ATF). This force gives the unified commander a wide array of force employment options to include forward presence, crisis response, or forcible entry.

The National Military Strategy for the 1990's, states that the military strategy brought about by changes in the strategic environment has a very definite regional focus. "...forward presence and crisis response are fundamental to our regionally oriented strategy. Forward presence gives us the means to influence, deter, and pursue our national interests. Crisis response gives us the ability to project power

and decisively use military force when and where the national leadership determines it is needed."2

An overriding requirement in the future will be the ability to plan rapidly and effectively for the execution of a real world contingency with the forces, lift, logistics, and enemy situation at hand. "The U.S. Fleet and Fleet Marine Forces serve as the primary hedge against strategic uncertainty, and their operational planning and task organizational concepts have been developed to meet that role on short notice."3

The Marine Corps recognizes the existence of a discipline of the military art that is above the level of tactics but subservient to the realm of strategy. This link between the two is called the operational level of war.<sup>4</sup> Long recognized, this link has been referred to as la grande tactique by the French and English, operativ by the Germans, and operativnyi by the Russians.<sup>5</sup> The United States refers to it as a level of war but it has come to mean much more than just a warlike activity. It has become a way of thinking about the conduct and planning of war that requires the capability and vision to coordinate many different and apparently separate elements aimed at the accomplishment of a distant strategic goal. FMFM 1-1, Campaigning, describes the operational level of war as

"...the discipline of conceiving, focusing, and exploiting a variety of tactical actions to realize a strategic aim. In its essence, the operational level involves deciding when, where, for what purpose, and under what conditions to give battle - and to refuse battle as well - with reference to the strategic design. It governs the deployment of forces, their commitment to or withdrawal from combat, and the sequencing of successive tactical actions to achieve strategic objectives."<sup>6</sup>

In a Parameters (Jun 88) article, the authors, Dwight Adams and Clayton Newell stated that "...the operational level of war properly relates to the strategic aims, not to the size, echelon, or type of the formations involved...."<sup>7</sup> In Race to the Swift, Richard Simpkin asserts that in order for a plan or concept to be considered operational art it must meet certain criteria. The mission must be only one level removed from a strategic aim; dynamic, closed-loop system characterized by speed and appropriateness of response; considers the opponent's will and synergistic effect of employing forces together; and is self-contained within the scope of the mission.<sup>8</sup>

The concept of maneuver warfare is closely linked with the operational level of war. Maneuver warfare emphasizes concentration, speed, and surprise in order

to shatter the enemy's morale, break his cohesion, and exploit his vulnerabilities. "...An expeditionary force in particular must be prepared to win quickly, with minimal casualties and limited external support, against a physically superior foe. This requirement mandates a doctrine of maneuver warfare."<sup>9</sup> This concept is often described in terms of the tactical level, but applies equally well to the operational level of war.

The operational level of war is normally thought of as covering a long period of time. Forces must be placed in a position of advantage, the initiative must be retained and events must be shaped to favor one's forces prior to battle. It is important to note that any event that impacts on a nation's strategic aims, no matter the size of the force, time frame covered, or the amount of land mass needed, can and may be considered to be at the operational level of war. The special operations forces operating in Iraq during the Gulf War and the act of bombing the Marine Barracks in Beirut by a Shi'ite fanatic achieved successes of operational and even strategic importance.<sup>10</sup> This distinction has direct implications for the use of amphibious forces. A unified commander may achieve operational or strategic aims through the use of forward deployed amphibious forces.

The operational level of war is articulated by the unified commander through a campaign plan. Campaign planning is defined by FMFM 1, Warfighting, as: "A plan for a series of related military operations aimed to accomplish a common objective, normally within a given time and space."<sup>11</sup>

The operational level of war encompasses the ability to strike enemy forces so they can not be used against friendly forces or employed to accomplish the enemy's strategic aim. With this idea in mind it should be clear that the term operational art can be applied equally to a naval or a continental campaign.

Amphibious forces, through their mobility, sea-based logistics, and tailored force organization, give a unified commander the necessary tools to conduct operations when and where he chooses and have the organic strength and staying power to finish the fight.

With an understanding of the operational level of war and its link to amphibious warfare, it is useful to examine several recent examples of MAGTF employment. An illustration of the flexibility and combat power inherent in a MAGTF would facilitate an understanding of how they could be employed in future crises or contingency operations.



### III. Amphibious Warfare - Historical Underpinning

The practical value of history is to throw the film of the past through the material projector of the present onto the screen of the future.

B.H. Liddell Hart, Thoughts on War<sup>1</sup>

B.H. Liddell Hart, in his book Thoughts on War, stated succinctly the value of studying history. We learn from the past in order not to make mistakes in the future. This section examines the underpinning of the Marine Corps' roles and functions in national security. Second, it examines the background of the modern MAGTF and types currently in use by the Marine Corps. Third, it examines several crises situations that MAGTFs have been involved in during the last ten years and points to a precedence for their use during the uncertain times facing our nation. These historical examples clarify the flexibility and versatility that amphibious forces can offer the national command authority or a unified commander at the strategic or operational level of war.

#### Marine Corps Roles and Functions

The National Security Act of 1947 and amended in 1952 by the 82nd Congress, established the basic foundation and purpose of the Marine Corps and codified it in Title 10, U.S. Code, paragraph 5063:2

- Provide Fleet Marine Forces of combined arms for service with the fleet in the seizure or defense of advanced naval bases and for the conduct of such land operations as may be essential to the prosecution of a naval campaign.
- Provide detachments and organizations for service on armed vessels of the Navy.
- Provide security detachments for the protection of naval property at naval stations and bases.
- Perform such other duties as the President may direct.

Within this legislation is prescribed both the missions and the structure of the Marine Corps. In accordance with this public law, the Marine Corps is structured as three divisions and three aircraft wings, with the requisite combat service support to support them.<sup>3</sup>

The intent of the legislation was to ensure that the United States would have a strong "force in readiness" to respond to crises short of general war. This ready force, in combination with the mobility assets provided by the U.S. Navy and Air Force, would be poised to respond to a wide variety of contingencies and to deter aggression around the globe.

The force structure that the Marine Corps adopted to be a "force in readiness" was the MAGTF. The first modern MAGTF was developed in 1950 and was based on experiences of the 3rd and 5th Marine Amphibious Corps in World War II.<sup>4</sup> The First Provisional Brigade was committed to combat operations in the defense of the

Pusan Perimeter during the early days of the Korean War. Composed of the Fifth Marines, Marine Air Group 33, and associated support forces, these units demonstrated the MAGTF's potential as this unit was a key stabilizing force in the defense of the perimeter.<sup>5</sup> Led by a single commander and assisted by a fully integrated air-ground staff, the First Provisional Brigade became the prototype for subsequent MAGTF structure.

All MAGTFs, regardless of size, have the same basic structure: a command element (CE), a ground combat element (GCE), an aviation combat element (ACE), and a combat service support element (CSSE), capable of supporting the entire MAGTF.<sup>6</sup> MAGTFs range in size from the special purpose forces, composed of perhaps as few as a hundred Marines up to the Marine Expeditionary Force which is made up of an entire Marine Division, a Marine Air Wing, and an Force Service Support Group.

Over the years the MAGTF concept has evolved to where there are currently five types in use by the Marine Corps:<sup>7</sup>

- Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF)
- Amphibious
- Norway Airlanded MEB (NALM)
- Air Contingency Force (ACF)
- Special purpose forces

Of the five MAGTF organizations, four have seen a very high tempo of operations in the last year and have

been used extensively over the last ten years. The NALM has been exercised but not to its full potential or in actual hostilities.

With a background of the Marine Corps' roles and missions and a basic understanding of the MAGTF concept, it would be useful to examine recent examples of how the National Command Authority (NCA) and unified commanders have utilized their "force in readiness".

#### Urgent Fury - 1983

On Sunday, October 23, 1983, the United States received an urgent, formal request from the five member nations of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States to assist in a joint effort to restore order and democracy on the island of Grenada.<sup>8</sup>

Among the units selected for the operation was an amphibious task force that had sailed for Lebanon on 18 October. The 22nd Marine Amphibious Unit was informed of their changed mission on 21 October when the task force was ordered to change course and take station northeast of Grenada.

Vice Admiral Metcalf, the Commander, Second Fleet, in overall command of the Grenada operation, established D-day as 25 October 1983. He "... assigned the amphibious force...the mission of seizing Pearls Airport and the port of Grenville....Simultaneously,

Army Rangers...with elements of the 82d Airborne Division would secure points at the southern end of the island, including the airfield under construction near Point Salines. A carrier battle group and Air Force elements would support the ground forces."<sup>9</sup> The joint force accomplished their assigned missions and on 2 November, the Marines were relieved by elements of the 82d Airborne Division. The Marines returned to their ships and the amphibious task force resumed its interrupted journey to the Mediterranean.

"JCS officers claimed that Urgent Fury was a textbook example of how units of different services could act together in pursuit of clearly defined national objectives."<sup>10</sup> The true picture that came out of the operation was of failure in the joint warfare arena. Every service that participated experienced failure in either coordination or preparation for the invasion. Urgent Fury was a catalyst to bring the services together in a joint effort to solve the problems that arose in the short operation.

#### Desert Shield - Desert Storm 1990-1991

With the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990, Saddam Hussein set the stage for the largest projection of U.S. naval, land and air power since the Vietnam War. President Bush described the U.S.

commitment to the Middle East in Operation Desert Shield as the "key not just to the functioning of this country, but to the entire world."<sup>11</sup> Desert Shield with its build-up of combat power eventually led to Desert Storm, and the forceful expulsion of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Of the Marine combat forces committed in Saudi Arabia the majority were used in a conventional ground combat role. Marine forces ashore consisted of two divisions and afloat there were two MEBs and one MEU. The importance of the Marine Corps' amphibious contributions should not be overlooked when analyzing the lessons from Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

After the arrival of the 82nd Airborne Division, the first truly viable defensive force that arrived in Saudi Arabia, 18 days into Desert Shield, was the 7th Marine Expeditionary Brigade. The 16,500 man unit married up in Saudi Arabia with M-60 tanks, LAVs, AAVs, artillery, and other equipment stored in Maritime Pre-positioning Ships off of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.<sup>12</sup> As a complete MAGTF, the 7th MEB gave General Schwartzkopf the options and flexibility to employ this force over a wide area because of their inherent mobility and firepower. By 7 September a second Maritime Pre-positioning Ship Squadron (MPSRON) had arrived in SWA and combined, they were able to provide

enough supplies and equipment to the theater to enable 33,600 Marines and sailors to operate for 30 days of sustained combat. The third MPSRON was on standby until December when it completed its offload in SWA. Desert Shield/Storm was the first real test of the Maritime Pre-positioning force and proved the validity of the concept.

A noted defense analyst stated of the Marine Corps' MPSRON capability: "What we saw in the war was that in terms of how fast they can get there, how heavy a punch they have when they arrive, and how long they can sustain themselves, the Marine Corps fits well between Army airborne and heavy forces."<sup>13</sup> Central Commands' offensive capability came later with the arrival of Army mechanized and armor divisions.

During Operation Desert Shield/Storm the Marine Corps had three amphibious MAGTFs afloat in the Persian Gulf ready to make an amphibious assault if required. Although the amphibious MAGTFs did not make an assault they did cause commitment of seven Iraqi divisions to guard threatened but uncontested beaches in Kuwait.<sup>14</sup>

#### Crisis/Contingency Response - 1991

Desert Shield/Desert Storm was not the only crisis that naval forces were called to respond to in 1991. Due to their distinct naval capabilities, the Navy and

Marine Corps team conducted a variety of "real world" operations around the globe:

- Liberia. Starting in July 1990 and ending in January 1991, Navy and Marine Corps units were involved in Operation Sharp Edge. They provided security for the United States Embassy and eventually evacuated 2,400 civilians from Liberia during that country's violent insurrection. The Navy-commanded Joint Task Force (JTF) was able to quickly establish a presence, remain off shore for an extended time, and react to the changing conditions ashore on little or no notice.<sup>15</sup>

- Somalia. Operation Eastern Exit drew amphibious forces from Desert Storm to execute the rescue of 260 American civilians and other non-combatants from the violence of civil-war torn Somalia. The long-range rescue was launched at night from sea, covered 2,000 miles, and was completed in less than three days.<sup>16</sup>

- Iraq. Operation Provide Comfort assisted more than 500,000 Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq and southern Turkey. Naval forces in the Mediterranean provided logistics, humanitarian, and military security to the region. The MEU was the lead, initially self-sustained, enabling force to support those in need. The operation eventually involved Army, Air Force, and allied units - a true combined effort.<sup>17</sup>



- Bangladesh. Returning to their home station in California after Desert Storm, the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade was diverted to provide assistance to 1.7 million people in Bangladesh following devastating floods. The Marine-commanded, multi-service JTF used airplanes, helicopters, and hovercraft to deliver over 2,000 tons of fuel, food, medicine, and equipment. The people of Bangladesh called the operation "Sea Angel."<sup>18</sup>

- Philippines. Forward-deployed naval forces formed a JTF for Operation Flery Vigil that provided emergency services, clean-up assistance, and evacuation support following the eruption in June of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines. Over 17,000 people were evacuated by the JTF using an aircraft carrier, Marine helicopters and an MPS ship.<sup>19</sup>

- Haiti. Three separate Marine-commanded JTFs were formed, with forces from every branch of the armed services, to aid refugees fleeing Haiti after a coup in that country. The most comprehensive relief effort since the Cuban boatlifts of 1980, the Navy and Coast Guard transported the refugees to the United States Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. In total, over 11,000 refugees were housed and cared for.<sup>20</sup>

After having first examined the underpinning of the Marine Corps' roles and functions as established by Congress the historical examples give a sound basis for how the National Command Authority and the Joint Chiefs of Staff view the Marine Corps and its role in world-wide crises situations. Perhaps the biggest lesson to come out of the Gulf War is the role that naval forces can take as an "enabling" force. First on the scene because of their forward presence, they can provide the transition from light through medium to the heavy, sustained warfighting capabilities should they be needed. An amphibious MAGTF or the introduction of maritime prepositioning ships can provide the "medium" capability until a heavy Army and sustaining Air Force arrive.<sup>21</sup> Marine Corps leaders view flexible forward-deployments as one of their greatest strengths, especially in an era of budget constraints and decreasing overseas basing.

The following analysis will examine the Norway Airlanded Marine Expeditionary Brigade (NALM) concept to see if it should continue to be a part of the Marine Corps' plan for crisis response as part of America's defense agenda for the 1990's.

#### IV. NALM - ANALYSIS and Evaluation

In forming the plan of a campaign, it is requisite to foresee everything the enemy may do, and be prepared with the necessary means to counteract it.

Napoleon I: Maxims of War, 1831<sup>1</sup>

The art of campaigning includes deciding who, when and where to fight and for what purpose. An important consideration in conducting the campaign is determining the aims, resources and limitations established by theater and national military strategy.<sup>2</sup> A campaign plan synchronizes land, sea, and air efforts within the theater of operations by providing the overall specific purpose, objectives, concepts and assets required to achieve strategic goals.<sup>3</sup> The NALM concept was designed to provide the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) and the theater level planners with a viable instrument of war with which to execute their campaign plan on the northern flank of Europe. The operational commander requires forces which will enable him to seize and maintain the initiative. He must be able to shape the battlefield and to do that he must be provided effective tools to fight.

This section examines whether the Norway Airlanded Marine Expeditionary Brigade (NALM), a unique MAGTF, will be a viable concept for crisis response as part of

America's defense agenda for the 1990's. The scope of the analysis covers the background and concept of employment for the NALM. The elements of combat power, as delineated in FMFM 1-1, Campaigning, are the chosen evaluation criteria for the analysis.

### NALM - Prepositioning Concept

A NALM operation is a strategic deployment option for reinforcing Norway. On 16 January 1981, the Governments of Norway and the United States signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that agreed to the NALM concept.<sup>4</sup> The concept consists of the use of selected equipment and supplies prepositioned in facilities in Central Norway for use by a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB). The MEB will be airlifted by strategic airlift into Central Norway to link up with the prepositioned equipment for further movement to an employment area within Norway.

The purpose of a NALM operation is to rapidly establish a MEB as a deterrent force ashore in Norway, prepared to conduct subsequent combat operations within the NATO chain of command.<sup>5</sup> The salient requirement for the concept is the secure area required to conduct arrival and assembly operations. In addition there must be adequate strategic airlift, out-load forces, arrival airfields, intercoastal host nation shipping,

host nation material handling equipment and motor transport support for specified requirements. NALM operations occur in five phases: planning, marshaling, movement, arrival and assembly, and redeployment.<sup>6</sup>

### Operational Doctrine

At the operational level of war, all efforts are focused on the "employment of military forces to attain strategic goals in a ... theater of operations through the ... conduct of campaigns and major operations."<sup>7</sup> The current version (May 1986) of the U.S. Army Field Manual 100-5, Operations, indicates that "the dynamics of combat power decide the outcome of campaigns, major operations....Combat power is the ability to fight...created by combining maneuver, firepower, protection, and leadership in combat actions against an enemy in war."<sup>8</sup> The degree of combat power produced by combining these elements is a direct reflection of the commander. The U.S. Marine Corps views combat power as the primary means for the application of military force.<sup>9</sup> The Fleet Marine Force Manual 1-1 (FMFM 1-1), Campaigning, presents a related but more extensive list of functions and capabilities that generate combat power: maneuver, mobility, tempo, intelligence, surprise, logistics and leadership.<sup>10</sup>

## Maneuver

Operational maneuver, defined in FMFM 1-1, Campaigning, impacts beyond the level of combat. Its aim is to reduce the amount of actual fighting necessary to accomplish the mission. "...We seek to gain an advantage which bears directly on the outcome of the campaign or in the theater as a whole."<sup>11</sup>

In the case of Desert Shield, we clearly see an example of how operational maneuver set the conditions for the tactical battle and then led to strategic success. The Marine Corps' Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF) gave General Schwartzkopf and his planners multiple maneuver options because MPF operations can be conducted over the shore as well as into developed port facilities. In Operation Desert Shield, port and airfield facilities had been especially built for just such a contingency, thus making the conditions for offloading ideal. The first of nine MPS ships from the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific squadrons was rapidly offloading combat equipment for two 16,500 man Marine Expeditionary Brigades within seven days of the order to move.<sup>12</sup> In a matter of just a few days, sufficient Joint and combined forces had been concentrated to effectively dispute any further threat to Saudi

territory and allowed time for the formation of strong coalition of nations.

The NALM, unlike all other Marine Corps MAGTFs, offers nothing to the operational planner in the way of options for operational level maneuver. The NALM is a defensive concept designed for the rapid reinforcement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO's) northern flank. What the NALM does do is that it enhances strategic mobility by decreasing the amount of airlift required to move a MEB and reduces force closure from weeks to days.<sup>13</sup> What the NALM does not do is give the unified commander an option of where to employ the force. The equipment is prepositioned in Central Norway and the MOU between Norway and the United States calls for the NALM to be employed in Norway. The NALM concept thus has a dampening effect on operational mobility.

### Mobility

"Operational mobility is the ability to move between engagements and battles within the context of the campaign or theater."<sup>14</sup> It can be argued that the essence of the operational level of war is deciding when and where to fight. Operational mobility is the means by which forces are committed based on a

decision. A significant advantage can be attained over an adversary through the use of operational mobility.

The amphibious MAGTF involved in Urgent Fury and the Maritime Prepositioning Force shipping involved in Desert Shield/Desert Storm are prime examples of the utility and versatility that the Marine Corps offers a unified commander. In Urgent Fury the MAGTF was able to land Marines on the eastern part of Grenada by helicopter and later the same day move west of the island and land another force by amphibious vehicles. Due to its structure, training and inherent flexibility the MAGTF was able to respond move between engagements as directed by the joint force commander.

In Desert Shield/Desert Storm, all three maritime prepositioning squadrons were deployed to the Persian Gulf. Several of the ships were reverted to "common user status" after they were offloaded and put into a pool for assignment to any sealift requirement for which they were suited.<sup>15</sup> Two of the ships were reloaded with equipment for the amphibious MEBs assigned to the theater. If an amphibious assault had occurred these ships had assault follow-on equipment that would have been landed after the initial assault.<sup>16</sup>

With selected equipment and stocks prepositioned in Central Norway the NALM will rely on strategic



airlift to reach its assembly areas. Once its equipment has been issued the NALM will be a viable fighting force and then is available for rapid movement into its designated defensive positions within the country of Norway.

A fundamental question arises about the utility of the NALM concept as part of this countries ability to respond to a crisis in the 1990's. The NALM is one of SACEUR's means to respond to a crisis in the NATO arena as long as it is used on the northern flank. If the decision is made that the NALM should be shifted to the central or southern region a problem arises with the MOU between the United States and Norway. The Norwegian government has stated that "Norway will never take part in a policy with aggressive aims. She will never allow Norwegian territory to be used in the service of such a policy....as long as Norway is not attacked or exposed to threats of attack."<sup>17</sup>

Given the Norwegian governments political history and stated position on the matter, it can be surmised that they would not favorably view the withdrawal of the NALM prepositioned equipment for movement and employment in response to a crisis anyplace other than in Norway. Operational mobility does not exist if the political realities will not allow unhindered use of the NALM and its prepositioned equipment and stocks.

## Tempo

FMFM 1-1, Campaigning, states that "tempo is a rate or rhythm of activity. Tempo is a significant weapon because it is through a faster tempo that we seize the initiative and dictate the terms of war. Operational tempo is...the ability to consistently shift quickly from one tactical action to another."<sup>18</sup> The Marine Corps has officially adopted a maneuver warfare philosophy that "...seeks to shatter the enemy's cohesion through a series of rapid, violent, and unexpected actions which create a turbulent and rapidly deteriorating situation with which he cannot cope."<sup>19</sup> The ultimate goal is to set an operational tempo that causes the enemy to capitulate without a major fight. The U.S. Army's Airland Battle doctrine seeks a similar outcome.

The multifaceted air, ground, and sea campaign of Desert Storm gave the world a clear lesson on the importance of superior operational tempo. General Schwarzkopf validated one of Sun Tzu's axioms that states "rapidity is the essence of war."<sup>20</sup>

The NALM can facilitate the establishment of a fast operational tempo within the theater of operations. If the political and military decisions are made in a timely manner, prior to actual

hostilities, the NALM can be rapidly concentrated in Central Norway at the designated reception areas. Deployment planning efforts for NALM operations use the Joint Operations Planning System (JOPS). Unified commanders or their designated planning staff need to make basic decisions which are required for the deployment of the NALM. These decisions will include the MAGTF's mission, establishment of command relationships, control measures, and basic security measures. Emergency defensive measures will be a planning priority. Given the limited number of employment options for the NALM it should not be too difficult for planners to designate missions and areas of operation.

Once the NALM has assumed its assigned defensive positions operational tempo will no longer exist until follow-on forces arrive in the form of an amphibious MAGTF or portions of the MPF are flown into the theater. Tempo at the tactical level will be possible and is part of the overall defensive plan. A "shield of blows" from the defensive force can keep an attacking enemy off balance but the assigned defensive positions can not be surrendered due to their importance in the overall campaign plan.

## Intelligence

Now the reason the enlightened prince and the wise general conquer the enemy whenever they move and their achievements surpass those of ordinary men is foreknowledge.

Sun Tzu<sup>21</sup>

"Because the operational level of war has as its aim the attainment of a strategic objective, operational intelligence must provide insight into the strategic situation and all factors, military and otherwise, that influence it."<sup>22</sup>

As opposed to tactical intelligence, operational intelligence must take a wide view over area and a longer view of time, looks at strategy and enemy intentions, plus it focuses less on current combat capabilities and more on forecasting future enemy capabilities and options.<sup>23</sup>

The intelligence planning for a NALM operation is unique in relation to the other type of MAGTF's. The possible employment areas are known and limited in number. Accurate data bases exist for terrain, port and air facilities, and meteorology to name a few. Most information gathering assets organic to the NALM are principally tactical in scope. As a result, the NALM commander must rely on assets external to the NALM for sources for much of his operational intelligence. Once a NALM operation commences, intelligence support

will be available from a variety of national, theater and fleet level organizations due to the joint and combined nature of the operational area. The main sources of intelligence support will be either Commander South Norway (COMSONOR) or Commander North Norway (COMNON).<sup>24</sup>

Operational intelligence is not always available to commanders and their planning staffs. During the planning for Urgent Fury operational intelligence was almost nonexistent. At the highest levels of the intelligence community there was a lack of even basic knowledge of the island.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps the best operational as well as tactical intelligence source for the amphibious task force came from two of its own members. A Navy officer on the amphibious squadron staff had sailed in Grenadian waters six years earlier and was familiar with the tides, surf, beaches, and coast. The Marine battalion commander, LtCol Smith, had attended Armed Forces Staff College, where his term paper had covered a hypothetical landing on Grenada.<sup>26</sup> Their information and knowledge allowed the amphibious task force to begin the planning process with some degree of credibility.

Due to the defensive nature of the NALM operation, existing intelligence databases become time critical and will require special collection efforts. It is

Imperative that intelligence efforts focus on the following:27

- threat impact on arrival, assembly and redeployment.
- status of designated arrival airfields.
- status of road network between the storage areas and the staging areas.
- prevailing weather conditions in the arrival, assembly and in the employment areas.
- support facilities in the staging areas.
- status of ports in the redeployment and employment areas.
- counter-intelligence threat to arriving forces.

The NALM commander operating in Norway will enjoy the best intelligence support available because of the combined and joint nature of the operation and the multiple agency support sources available. An important source of intelligence for the NALM commander will be the Marines within his command that have been involved in cold weather exercises in Norway. The annual exercises take place in the likely crisis employment areas for the NALM. As in the planning for Urgent Fury, there are people that have knowledge of the terrain that can significantly influence the operational plans.

A glaring problem with the NALM concept is its predictability. American participation in the defense of North Norway has been widely publicized as has been the storage of Marine equipment as part of the concept. Operational level intelligence for the NALM will be

critical to carry out their defensive mission but even with the best intelligence sources available, operational surprise will not be possible in the initial employment of the Marines due to the defensive nature of the overall concept. Surprise may well be attained later but only with the addition of an amphibious MAGTF or with the addition of some other form of offensive capability.

### Surprise

"Operational surprise catches the enemy unprepared in such a way as to impact on the campaign....may be the product of deception...of ambiguity...or, surprise may simply be the product of a flair for the unexpected."<sup>28</sup> During Desert Shield operational surprise was undoubtedly achieved by the speed and efficiency with which the three MPSONs composited at Jubul, Saudi Arabia. In a period of under two weeks a Marine Expeditionary Force of over 30,000 Marines with combat equipment were ready for combat.<sup>29</sup> No nation in history has concentrated so much combat power with so little warning and in so short a period of time. No military force other than the United States Marines has the ability to project such force when and where required in so short a period of time.

The current concept of the NALM is not without problems that could inhibit the attainment of operational surprise. A political reinforcement operation, the NALM concept conforms to the political objective which is the defense of Norway. The entire concept rests on the premise that political decisions will be made early enough to deploy the NALM to its reception areas in Norway and then on to its employment areas. The storage areas, reception areas, and employment areas are not secret and have been a matter of public knowledge for many years. This does not lend itself to either tactical or operational surprise.

In major expeditions or war, Marine forces generally support campaigns; they do not unilaterally wage them. As such, they will be assigned a part of a unified effort rather than the effort as a whole.<sup>30</sup> Operational objectives assigned to the NALM will relate to physical features - the seizure and control of land and/or airspace - the use of which may be essential to the conduct of a larger naval or continental effort. Operational objectives for the NALM are decisive points for any force that has as its goal the control of the North Atlantic or the coast of Norway. These decisive points are not that hard to determine as the country is extremely rugged and sparsely populated. Therefore, surprise may be impossible to attain by the NALM



because the physical objectives needed to control the country are so apparent. Tactical surprise may well be achieved at the small-unit level but operational surprise may be impossible to attain until follow-on amphibious forces are introduced into the theater to give the supported CINC a capability to strike when and where he chooses.

### Logistics

"Operational logistics...connects the logistical efforts at the tactical and strategic levels, taking the resources supplied by strategy and making them available in sufficient amounts to the tactical commander." 31

NALM operations are logistical in nature, as they essentially involve the deployment, redeployment, and preparation for employment of the MAGTF. Planning for the NALM operations must be comprehensive and address the multi-faceted character of the operation, to include logistic support during: 32

- marshaling and movement to airports of embarkation
- air movements
- arrival and reception in the arrival and assembly area
- preparations for, and issue of NALM prepositioned equipment and supplies
- support of future tactical operations

The NALM is the Marine Corps' only land prepositioning program. Specifically identified for prepositioning are those items which are mission essential, heavy weight/high volume, suited for extended storage and not available through Wartime Host Nation Support. Where possible, the prepositioned equipment and supplies have been tailored for use in an arctic environment.<sup>33</sup> Logistics is a prime key to success, especially in a cold weather environment where survival is dependent on a continuous flow of supplies. The Marine Corps has devoted a great deal of effort at the operational level to insure that adequate stocks are prepositioned in Norway to support the tactical commander if the need should arise.

### Leadership

FMFM 1-1, Campaigning, states that "leadership is the personal ability to influence the performance of human beings in pursuit of a goal."<sup>34</sup> At the operational level, leadership requires a clarity of vision, strength of will and moral courage. A climate of cohesion among the various units must be established as well as with higher and lower headquarters. Leadership, according to FM 100-6, Large Unit Operations, "...is the glue that binds all the elements

of operational design into a coherent whole."<sup>35</sup> The application of successful leadership results in understanding and commitment from subordinates for the purpose of accomplishing goals and objectives beyond that which is possible through the use of authority alone.

With the invasion of Kuwait, the leaders of Saudi Arabia were very quick to ask the United States to intervene and halt the threat to their border. Their quick and timely decision allowed the United States and its coalition partners to begin the flow of troops and equipment that eventually pushed the Iraqi Army out of Kuwait. General Norman Schwarzkopf, as the commander of the coalition forces, clearly demonstrated to a high degree the ability to influence the performance of human beings in pursuit of a goal during Desert Shield and Desert Storm. He had the clarity of vision, strength of will and moral courage that is necessary to be an effective leader at the operational level of war. Working not just with U.S. Army troops or in a joint environment, he clearly understood the capabilities and limitations of the coalition forces assigned him and made maximum use of each asset assigned.

The lesson to be drawn from this is that while the NALM does provide SACEUR with a self-contained fighting force (MAGTF) that is task-organized to suit the

assigned mission, the NALM will be involved in coalition warfare. It is important that the unified commander and his planning staff understand the nature and capabilities of the NALM concept and utilize the command and control structure already established to maximize its combat power.<sup>36</sup> The Marine Corps has been involved in combined exercises in Norway every year since 1976. Coalition and joint service command problems should not be a hinderance due to the command relationships that have been established and exercised in excess of ten years since the NALM concept was agreed on by the two governments.

Within the realm of operational leadership, the NALM is sound in concept and structure. The organization, responsibilities, and command relationships in the joint and coalition environment have been exercised and refined to a point where the concept will work if put into operation. But, the NALM concept does have one salient flaw that could doom it to failure. The one flaw, although above the operational level, needs to be addressed because it does have a direct impact on the operational commander.

The unique nature of NALM operations requires timely political and military decisions by a wide spectrum of commands, agencies and organizations from the national governments involved down through the

chain of command to the elements of the NALM.<sup>37</sup> The one flaw in the NALM concept is the dependence on the timely political decision that must be made by the Norwegian government. "It is up to the Norwegian authorities to determine whether and when allied reinforcements are to summoned to the country."<sup>38</sup> There exists a fundamental tension in Norwegian security policy: "Norway depends absolutely on allied reinforcements for both deterrence...and defense if deterrence fails, yet views the presence of allied forces in and around Norway as potentially antagonistic ...and therefore destabilizing in a crisis."<sup>39</sup>

Norwegian post-war history and government policy statements all point to the distinct possibility that the political leadership will delay in calling for allied reinforcements in a crisis, especially if those reinforcements are Americans.<sup>40</sup> While Norwegian reasoning may be sound, the possibility for miscalculation remains. Military planners have a number of options that could mitigate the effects of a delayed call for reinforcements to include the use of an amphibious MAGTF or the maritime prepositioning force. The key to any of these options is to have prepared contingency plans in effect if the political decisions are delayed.

## V. Conclusion

As demonstrated by the commitment of Marines to answer global crises during the last decade and in looking at the "threat" environment into the 1990's, the NALM is not relevant to the Marine Corps' mandated roles and missions. The NALM should be done away with but political realities in Europe will pressure the United States to maintain the prepositioning stocks in Norway. Budget constraints in the upcoming years will have to be balanced with the U.S.'s commitment to the NALM and eventually the equipment will likely be withdrawn.

The best contribution of the Marine Corps in the developing national security for the 1990's will be in the form of crisis response. The Marine Corps' forte will remain the "no notice" crisis and in the types of evacuation/disaster relief expeditions it has always done. Through the years the Marine Corps has tailored a wide range of packages, well prepared and poised for global deployment through the entire spectrum of deployment means. These forces provide the nation with its "fire brigades", prepared to defend national interests at great distance from our shores. This has been, historically, the Marine's true role and one for which they are ideally suited. For over 217 years,

Marines have refined this prototype into a premier expeditionary force, consistent with the intent of Congress.

Sir Basil Liddell Hart, a well-known British historian and strategist, observed that:

A self-contained and sea-based amphibious force of which the Marine Corps is the prototype is the best kind of fire extinguisher, because of its flexibility, reliability, logistic simplicity, and relative economy.<sup>1</sup>

The NALM is an abnormality when viewed against the historical precedence established over the Marine Corps' long history and in view of today's strategic environment. Despite the amount of money and planning effort that has gone into the NALM, key shortcomings have been highlighted by my analysis. These "shortcomings" have implications for the Marine Corps and the NALM's viability as part of this Nation's ability to respond to global crises.

In the late 1970's, the Marine Corps actively sought this assignment at a time of transition in roles and missions - a time of decreasing amphibious lift and increasing commitment to "rapid deployment" tasks. Prepositioning ashore in Norway is uncharacteristic for the Marine Corps as they are "soldiers of the sea." The concept does not allow the Marine Corps to benefit from the inherent flexibility that an amphibious MAGTF or the maritime prepositioning program allows. The

U.S. prepositioning initiative still has perhaps more political significance than it does military value. The Norwegians needed a positive signal of U.S. commitment to their defense and cargo ships are not nearly as reassuring as the warehousing ashore is. With a Soviet "threat" to Norway, the NALM helped preserve the delicate Nordic balance and did emit a positive signal.

The Honorable H. Lawrence Garrett, III, Secretary of the Navy, recently stated before Congress that "A key point in today's strategic environment is that naval forces are above all else enabling components of our nation's joint, multi-service military strategy. Forward-positioned Navy and Marine Corps forces can respond quickly to regional crises; once there, they are often the "wedge" which opens the way for full-scale joint military or humanitarian operations."<sup>2</sup> The capability of the Armed Forces for forcible entry is an important weapon in the arsenal of the joint force commander. Strategic and operational leverage can be achieved as was demonstrated in the Gulf War by the threat of a powerful and flexible forcible entry capability.

The Marine Corps' ultimate mission must be to meet the recognized needs of the nation while ensuring the flexibility to adjust to unanticipated requirements.



Leaders of the Marine Corps must continue to study the strategic situation in order to assure the relevance of the role of the Corps in national defense and the specific roles of Marine forces employed during international crises.

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